

STATEMENT

OF

**EUGENE R. DAVIS
DEPUTY CHIEF PATROL AGENT
U.S. BORDER PATROL
BLAINE SECTOR
BLAINE, WASHINGTON**

REGARDING

NORTHERN BORDER ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

BEFORE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND CLAIMS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**APRIL 14, 1999
2237 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
10: 00AM**

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, my name is Eugene R. Davis. I am the

Deputy Chief Patrol Agent, U.S. Border Patrol, at the Blaine Sector, in Blaine, Washington. Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify on enforcement issues and concerns that exist along the U.S./ Canada Border. For the past 20 years it has been my privilege to serve as a Border Patrol Agent, Supervisory Border Patrol Agent, and Staff Officer in the Blaine Sector area of operations. It is my hope that I can convey to you an accurate synopsis of the day to day challenges that the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol in the Blaine Sector encounter.

INTRODUCTION

The Blaine Border Patrol Sector shares approximately 102 miles of land border with Canada. The majority of illegal smuggling activity takes place within 35-miles between Blaine and Ross Lake, Washington. The other 67 miles, which extends to the crest of the North Cascade Mountains, is mostly remote wilderness area, made up of terrain which is very difficult to enter. The 35-mile area between Blaine and Ross Lake is diverse and is very challenging to patrol. Much of this land consists of open berry fields on both sides of the Border and roads in Canada and the United States that parallel each other. It is very easy to simply jump or drive across the small ditch, which separates the two countries. This is the most common modus operandi for the smugglers operating along both sides of the border. The U.S./Canada Border is significantly different than our border with Mexico in that most of the smuggling on our Southern Border is northbound, whereas smuggling along the Border in Blaine Sector is both north and south. In fact, it is common to have the same smugglers moving illegal contraband in both directions.

Their bottom line is profit.

Blaine Sector also is responsible for 150 miles of water boundary that separates the United States and Canada. Within these waters just south of Canada are the San Juan Islands, which number close to 200 small to medium size islands. Over the past 100 years these islands have always been a haven for smuggling activity.

In addition to the responsibility for controlling the border areas, Blaine Sector has also been tasked with various interior enforcement functions. The Sector has overall enforcement responsibility for 16 counties in Western Washington and five counties in Oregon. The majority of the work in these areas has consisted of working with other law enforcement agencies to identify and remove criminal aliens. We also have enforcement responsibility in agriculture, reforestation, and the commercial fishing industry in Western Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

MANPOWER RESOURCES

Blaine Sector at the present time has 42 Border Patrol Agents on duty. These positions are spread out among five Border Patrol Stations and also include our sector staff positions. (We also have a six member Anti- Smuggling unit and eight Detention Enforcement Officers.) The 42 Agent positions also include an Aircraft Pilot and an Intelligence Agent.

Within the past two months Blaine Sector has been given an additional seven agents that

will increase our total Border Patrol Agent level of staffing to 49 positions. These additional Agents will be assigned to our Stations at Blaine and Lynden, Washington. This will increase the total Agents at Blaine Station to 21 and Lynden Station to 13.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

By far the best strategy that has been developed along the Border is the operational liaison and intelligence that the Sector has been able to establish with other law enforcement agencies. This includes working closely with U.S. Customs, the Drug Enforcement Administration, local law enforcement agencies and with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Canada. Each of our individual agencies has limited manpower along the border, so we have developed a unique Border Management posture. We have treated the border as a common entity and made great strides in not only sharing intelligence, but in actually working joint operations. We share a common radio frequency and are in constant contact as we work along both sides of the border. With HIDTA funding, we are in the midst of establishing an Intelligence Center at Blaine Sector Headquarters which will house Intelligence Analysts from the various agencies along the border. We anticipate that in the near future most operations will be intelligence driven.

PROBLEM AREAS

Over the last 10 years there has been phenomenal growth in the areas north of us in Canada. Vancouver, British Columbia has become one of the fastest growing cities in North America. It is an important link along the Interstate 5 corridor, which runs north from Southern California into the Pacific Northwest and then into Canada. We have experienced large increases in organized crime along the border. Our manpower levels during this time have been static. Ten years ago we experienced very little alien or drug smuggling activity along the border. We know now that illegal smuggling activity takes place on a daily basis. Due to limited manpower, we are able to respond to only 50% of our sensor intrusion alarms on any given day.

Over the past several years Canada has adopted a non-visa requirement policy with many countries that the United States continues to require visas from. This has resulted in many smugglers being able to easily bring third-country nationals into Canada and then smuggle them across the border into the United States. As an example, we have noted a large increase in the smuggling of Korean nationals during the last several years.

Over the last three years, Blaine Sector has experienced an increase in drug seizures along the border. The primary drug has been the high quality “BC Bud” marijuana that is grown in British Columbia. This high-grade marijuana has a THC level which tests out to 20% to 30%. Most Mexican Marijuana usually contains a THC level of around 5%. We have had reports of “BC Bud” going for as high as \$8,000 a pound in the Los

Angeles area. Blaine Sector's seizure of "BC Bud" during the last fiscal year was 600% over the previous year, that is 117 pounds interdicted in 1997 compared to 692 pounds in 1998.

Since June of 1996, Blaine Sector Border Patrol Agents have arrested three different individuals with terrorists ties. The most notable being ABU MEZER. A New York City Police Department Response team shot ABU MESER just hours before he planned to put bombs on the New York Subway System. The Canadian Government has stated that virtually every known terrorist group in the world has offices in Canada.

The Blaine Sector has no marine presence in the 150 miles of water boundary between the United States and Canada. It is suspected that there is a lot of smuggling activity taking place, but the only agency operating in these international waters on a permanent basis is the Coast Guard. They are tasked mainly with search and rescue type operations.

The last major concern that the Blaine Sector has is the continual detail of Blaine Agents to the Southern Border. At the present time we continue to send three agents south each month. This seems like a relatively small number but it reflects over 7% of our assigned manpower resources. We certainly see the need to send experienced journeyman agents to the southern Border and we have always done so when requested. However, it does affect our ability to provide coverage in our own area of responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In closing I again appreciate the opportunity that I have had to address the committee.

Each of us in the Border Patrol have worked on the Southern Border over the last decade and are aware of the terrific challenges that are there. I do not believe that we will ever have the same magnitude of problems along the Canadian Border. But we do have significant challenges that need to be met. I will be happy to attempt to answer any questions that you may have.